

## Engaging people in self-assessment of group activities

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### Key Words

The Wheel, India, forum, international development, evaluation, grain bank, health program, DRCSC, women, farmers, youth, landless

### Context

- For more than a decade, DRCSC has worked with groups of women, adolescents, farmers, and landless labourers on livelihood security projects and training activities.
- DRCSC has found it very difficult to involve group members in assessments of the progress of group activities. The most difficult conversations to have are open discussions about the weaknesses of implementation.

### Participants

- Self-help groups
- Farmers' groups
- Women's groups
- Grain Bank group

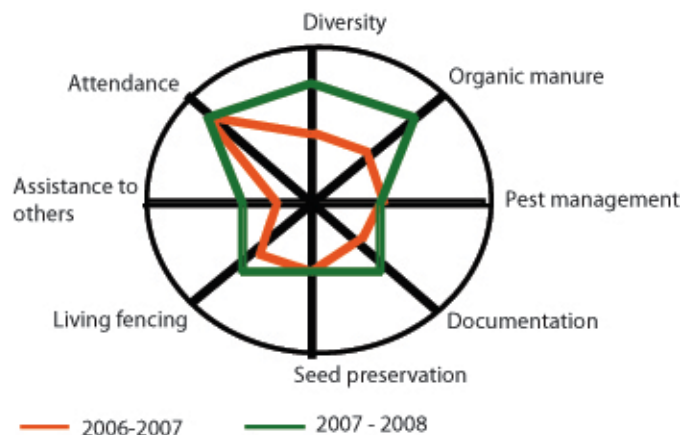
### Tools

- The Wheel

### Four examples of results

#### Example #1—Performance appraisal of a self-help group

Jagda is a village about 400 kilometers from Kolkata. Its inhabitants are mostly landless and marginal farmers belonging to a tribal community. Every six months, members of the group assess their progress using the Wheel.



### Questions:

- What are the indicators you identified six month before?
- What progress have you achieved related to these indicators?

**Method:** Participants discussed the questions and ranked 16 indicators using a 1–10 rating scale.

**Results:** The group identified the progress made on each indicator and future actions. They clearly understood that they have to give more emphasis to two key indicators.

### Example #2–Performance assessment of a farmers' group

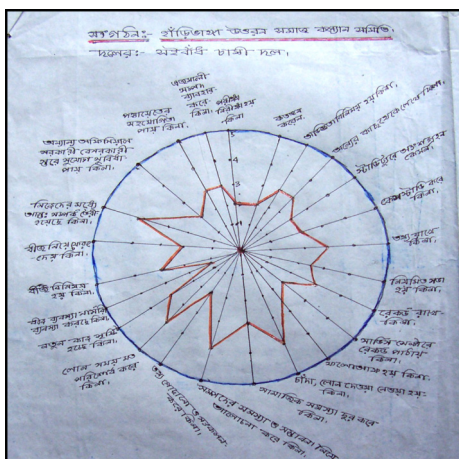
Sai-Bandh is a village about 300 kilometers from Kolkata. The inhabitants are mostly landless and marginal farmers belonging to a scheduled caste and a tribal community. One of DRCSC's partner organizations has been working in this region on food and livelihood security issues by forming self-managed groups. Sai-Bandh Farmers' group is one of these groups.

### Questions:

- What is your understanding of an ideal model for a self-help group?
- What are the indicators of an ideal group?
- Has the group achieved those indicators?
- To what extent have you achieved results related to those indicators?

**Method:** 18 participants discussed these questions and used a 1 to 5 rating scale for 24 indicators they identified.

**Results:** At the start, the group could not arrive at consensus when they attempted to assess each point using a rating scale. However, later the group members realized their weaknesses. They clearly understood what points they needed to emphasize more, such as the seed and nursery business, farming trails, and involvement in trails.



### Example #3–Assessment of nutrition garden program

Bidhichandrapur Chetana is one of DRCSC's partner organizations. It works in Udaynarayanpur block about 65 kilometers from Kolkata. People living in the community are from a scheduled caste. The nutrition garden program implemented by adolescence boys and girls provides the community with vegetables all year long. The Wheel was used to assess the progress of the garden program.

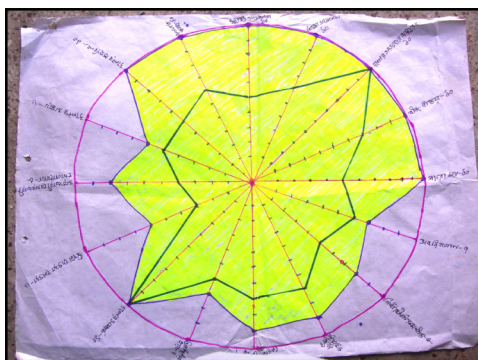
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**Questions:**

- What indicators did you select at the time of the first assessment?
- What progress have you achieved related to these indicators?

**Method:** Seven gardeners discussed these questions and used a 1–10 rating scale on the indicators they identified (see Figure).

**Results:** The group members were very enthusiastic about marking their ratings on a new example of the wheel. The facilitator showed the previous wheel diagram and included the new ratings on a new wheel. This helped participants reorient their views about the progress they had made.



#### **Example #4—Assessment of a Grain Bank**

Pathar Pratima Gram Panchayet is one of DRCSC's project areas in West Bengal. The major part of this delta is under dense forest cover with a network of rivers, streams, and their tributaries. The inhabitants are mostly landless and marginal farmers belonging to a scheduled caste. They often lack food. During times of food scarcity, poorer members of the community will sell utensils or animals or take out loans at very high rates of interest. In order to deal with food scarcity, a Grain Bank was introduced.

**Questions:**

- What is your group's understanding of an ideal/model group?
- What are the indicators of an ideal group?
- To what extent have you achieved results related to these indicators?

**Method:** Participants discussed these questions and used a 1 to 5 rating scale for eight indicators they identified.

**Results:** After the group finished the wheel exercise, the facilitator asked the group members what they understood from the wheel diagram. They replied that they have not given enough attention to social interactions with parts of society other than the non-governmental organizations.

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## Contributions of SAS<sup>2</sup>

The SAS Wheel exercise is very effective in involving communities in assessing their programs. It has helped give the communities a pictorial overview, which helps them to realize the weaknesses of program implementation.